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wethersfield

LIFE



Keeping kids warm

Young girl endeavors
to help CCMC patients

See story on page 6

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wethersfield **LIFE**

December 2017

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"Let's make this not seem like a forgotten wilderness place, let's make it part of the park." - Jim Woodworth

See story page 4

ON THE COVER

Camie Mollica is proud of the blanket-collecting campaign her 7-year-old daughter Bianca has spearheaded for fellow patients at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
See story page 6

- | | |
|----|-----------------------|
| 9 | Offering a hand up |
| 15 | Stylish approach |
| 18 | El Pollo Guapo |
| 20 | It's not too late |
| 22 | LIFE in the classroom |
| 26 | Serving up STEM |
| 28 | Plenty of color |
| 30 | Focusing on children |
| 32 | Calendar |
| 34 | Events spotlight |
| 35 | A new leash on LIFE |
| 38 | News roundup |
| 49 | Holiday LIFE |

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Promoting the environment

Efforts made to improve both Wood Parcel and Cove Park



courtesy photo

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Jim Woodworth is a longtime resident and environmental activist. He's always looking for ways to preserve the town's natural areas.

Two recent efforts for this officer and board member of the Great Meadows Conservation Trust were work on the Wood Parcel of open space and Wethersfield Cove, during which he was assisted by several people.

The Wood Parcel is several acres of land off Middletown Avenue that abuts Route 3. Part of it is rented out for farming and this activity can be seen from the road.



Photo by Mark Jahne

Linda Neilson and Jim Woodworth plant a cedar tree on the Wood Parcel, located between Middletown Avenue and Maple Street.

It also features a walking trail through the woods and alongside a marshy area. The land is home to numerous animal and bird species. It also has a connection to the Metropolitan District Commission's water control system.

"The whole meadows is an important bird area," Woodworth said.

One recent day found him and fellow GMCT board member Linda Neilson of Wethersfield toiling to plant new trees, two cedars and a juniper. They were also busy ripping out invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and multiflora rose that were choking off other more desirable growth.

"We're trying to get rid of a lot of these invasives," Neilson said.

Her father once told her that farmers in the Midwest historically used multiflora rose to prevent large animals, such as cows, from leaving designated pasture areas because it grows so thick and strong.

Woodworth showed off a newly reconstructed culvert beneath the walking path that drains water from a retention pond into the marshy flats. The original was built in 1952.

"It was broken and clogged," he said.

The MDC supplied the stone and pipe and David Ambrose Jr. of the Wethersfield Construction Co. provided free equipment and labor.

Woodworth used to live on River Road and has a long interest in the cove. He is an annual organizer of the Source to Sea Cleanup that takes place on a designated day every fall along the full length of the river as it passes through New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

He helped organize the effort at the cove again this year with assistance from individuals, Boy and Girl scouts, and a state-owned landing craft boat that transported the workers to the far side of the cove and back.

They cleaned not only around the public parking and recreational areas but also along the banks of the Connecticut River. The state Department of Transportation pruned the section that passes beneath I-91 between the cove and the river and painted over graffiti.

These volunteer workers removed 1.1 tons of trash and debris,

"Let's make this not seem like a forgotten wilderness place, let's make it part of the park."

— Jim Woodworth



Photo by Mark Jahne

Participants in the recent Source to the Sea Cleanup at Wethersfield Cove put their names on this sign that encourages people not to litter.



courtesy photo

Craig Butterworth of Wethersfield Construction operates the excavating machine.

a number consistent with past years.

The emergency access road that runs from the parking lot underneath the highway overpass was cleared of debris and overgrowth. Woodworth's dream is to make this a more popular way to access fishing and walking areas.

He also has an idea for the big



Among the Source to Sea volunteers were members of the Wethersfield High School Environmental Club.

gray wall that tends to attract spray paint-wielding vandals.

"Wouldn't it be nice to replace all of that graffiti with a mural? Let's

make this not seem like a forgotten wilderness place, let's make it part of the park," he said.

Another thought is to replace all

of the brush that was pruned or removed with native trees. Labels and signs would help educate the public about those plantings. **WL**



Craig Butterworth and Manny Arujo of Wethersfield Construction with Jim Woodworth of the Great Meadows Conservation Trust.

For more information about the Great Meadows Conservation Trust visit gmct.org.

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Giving back

Girl starts blanket and hat drive for hospitalized children

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Bianca Mollica,
7, who has
been treated
at Connecticut
Children's Medical
Center for a
gastrointestinal
disorder, decided to
help other patients
at the hospital.
She collects new
blankets for them
to call their own
and make their stay
more comfortable.

Courtesy photos



Camie Mollica calls her daughter "Bumblebee."

"Aerodynamically, bumblebees are not supposed to fly," she said. "But they don't know that, so they just do."

The nickname seems fitting for 7-year-old Bianca, a Wethersfield resident who has been in and out of the hospital since she was 3 weeks old.

"Technically, she shouldn't be able to do a lot of the stuff that she does," Mollica said.

She was smiling as her daughter danced and twirled around outside of Main Street Creamery.

Bianca has been a regular patient at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, first

with issues of feeding and digestion, as well as infant sleep apnea, which would cause her oxygen levels to plummet as she slept.

At around 18 months, with those issues under control, she began presenting new symptoms.

"She started getting these horrible, horrible nosebleeds," her mother

said.

In a three-week time frame, Bianca experienced 16 major nosebleeds, many of which required hospitalization. After several rounds of inconclusive blood tests, the family was referred to the hematology department at CCMC.

Several additional blood tests finally resulted in a diagnosis of Von Willebrand's Disease Type 1.

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"It turns out it's genetic," Mollica said. "Suddenly symptoms I'd been having my whole life made sense."

Von Willebrand's Disease Type 1 is a genetic disorder caused by a missing or defective clotting protein. With the cause of her nosebleeds identified Bianca, with the help of her mother, was able to learn how to better manage the disorder. But she still typically requires at least six trips to the hospital per year.

With so much time spent at CCMC over the past seven years the girl had a great deal of time to look around the hospital and she began to discover what she considered a big problem.

"She didn't like the blankets," Mollica said with a small smile. "She thought they were too boring."

Bianca became a patient ambassador, which gave voice to those with lifelong conditions, and

Bianca made the decision this past August to start collecting these items from friends and family. About a month later, Mollica posted on Facebook about their efforts and the initiative started to take off.

"It really snowballed from there," she said.

Bianca now has collection bins for blankets and hats throughout town at such places as Main Street Creamery, Battiston's, Weichert Realtors - The Zubretsky Group, Wethersfield Diner and Berkshire Hathaway, as well as in Rocky Hill at Scoops and Sprinkles and in Newington at Backstage Academy of Dance and Mirabelli Automotive.

"We didn't approach them. They all approached me," Mollica said. "I posted about it on Facebook and they all reached out to me saying they wanted to help."

Bianca's efforts grew even larger this fall after her mother received a phone call from a representative of the football team at Central Connecticut State University.

"They asked her to come to the football game," Mollica recalled. "They ended up collecting three big boxes of blankets and \$350 to buy more."

Members of the team wanted to be part of Bianca's project, so in addition to helping to collect blankets and hats, they also joined her

in her most recent trip to the hospital to deliver the blankets.

"When we did this last delivery, they took the blankets and immediately started handing them out," Mollica said. "They have 175 beds and they're almost always full."

Bianca is not allowed to deliver the blankets to patients directly, but just knowing she has made a difference is enough satisfaction. During her most recent trip with the CCSU team, she encountered something different.

"She's not allowed to hand them out because of privacy rules, but there was one very determined

"I'm helping people to keep warm. I'm doing something special for the kids at CCMC and giving them blankets and hats and it feels good."

- Bianca Mollica

began to notice that some of the other ambassadors were also working on individual charity projects. She decided to begin collecting blankets and hats for children staying in the hospital.

"It's interesting because she would see the kids there with hats and I always just thought they needed them to keep warm," Mollica said.

"I saw them and thought they don't want to show that they have cancer," Bianca said.

"I said this to some of the child life people there and they said that's exactly right," her mother added.

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mother," Mollica said. "Her daughter was maybe 14 years old and she came down and met the whole team and they were talking football. It was cool because you got to see how excited these kids are."

"It felt really awesome," Bianca added.

Not wanting to be outdone, Mollica said that members of the college's men's and women's basketball teams have now also reached out and indicated they would like to start collecting blankets and hats at their games.

"The teams want to do a night where Bianca will go and they'll collect donations," Mollica said.

Bianca and her mother have been able to make two trips to CCMC with donations and they are in the midst of planning for a third, hopefully before the start of the new year.

"At the end of the year, they're so depleted because of the holidays," Mollica said.

They hope to continue collecting and making donations three times per year.

"Even in the summer, that need is still there, even if it's not as heavy," Mollica said.

Mollica is grateful for all those who have donated. She is especially proud of her daughter for starting something that has grown larger and faster than predicted.

"It's a kid doing this," she said. "Yeah, I'm doing a lot of the leg work driving around, but this is a kid who is coming from her own experience as a patient."

Having the chance to help others in a way that she would like to be helped herself has been rewarding and Bianca hopes to keep going with her efforts.

"I'm helping people to keep warm," she said. "I'm doing something special for the kids at CCMC and giving them blankets and hats and it feels good." **WL**

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Offering a hand up

Town social services programs help make the holidays brighter

by Mark Jahne

Editor

The holiday season is just ahead and that means many residents will be enjoying special meals, giving and receiving gifts, and in general enjoying all that this time of year has to offer.

But that may not be the case for senior citizens on fixed incomes, people down on their luck or those with other needs. That's where the town Social and Youth Services Department comes in.

The department offers several longstanding programs to assist residents both during the holiday season and throughout the year. Director Kathleen Bagley and Assistant Director Erica Texeira are gearing up for a busy season.

All of the programs require that applicants provide proof of residency and meet specific financial

"We're a fuel bank for Operation Fuel. That's a pretty popular program."

- Erica Texeira

cial need criteria. Their identities are kept confidential.

First up is the Thanksgiving meal program. This provides a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. All of the food comes from donations of specific food items, money or gift cards.

Bagley said the town has offered this program for more than 30 years and the demand is steadily increasing. Last year, 131 families received food for Thanksgiving.

"We do our Thanksgiving distribution on Nov. 18," Texeira said. "We average 15 additional house-

holds each year, if not more."

Support comes from businesses, churches, schools and civic organizations. Local first responders conduct a food collection drive at Stop & Shop in the Jordan Lane Shopping Center.

"Our businesses and our residents have been very generous," Bagley said.

Residents may also apply for the Holiday Gift Program. This provides gifts to children who are 18 or younger and enrolled in school. Pre-registration is required and the application deadline is Dec. 4.

This program operates on donations of unwrapped and new toys or other products. Texeira said people donate toys, other suitable items and gift cards. The cards are particularly appreciated by teenage recipients.

"Parents and guardians are able to come in and go shopping for our youth," she said. "We've seen an increase there as well."

"The police do a toy collection for us the whole month of December," Bagley added.

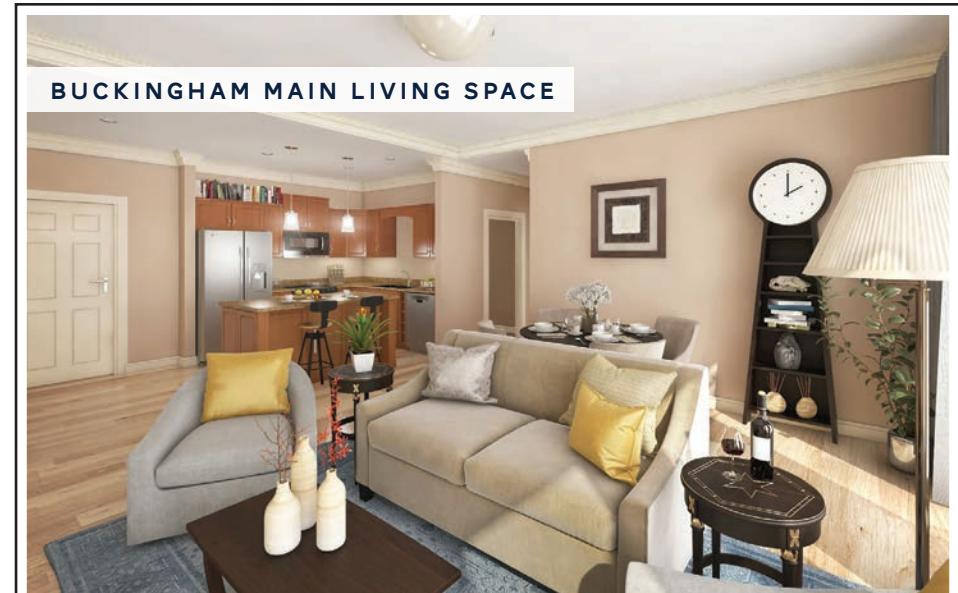
Donations may be dropped off at police headquarters at 250 Silas Deane Highway.

The two women said residents of all ages and backgrounds utilize these programs. The town conducts outreach to those who live in subsidized elderly housing or Wethersfield Housing Authority properties to inform them of the various services available to them.

There are also the ongoing food bank and fuel bank programs. The food bank operates 12 months a year and the fuel bank operates during the winter months when state law prohibits utility companies from shutting off the heat of those who cannot keep up with their payments.

"We're a fuel bank for Operation Fuel. That's a pretty popular program," Texeira said.

Like the other programs, it uses donations, not taxpayer dol-



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Photo by Mark Janine

Kathy Bagley, left, and Erica Texeira stand inside the food bank at town hall. This is one of several programs available to residents in need.

lars, to help those who qualify. Funding also comes from state and federal grants designated for energy-assistance programs.

The Richard M. Keane Foundation funds a weekend meal program for children. The Mayor's Charity Ball has also contributed to this effort.

"Both the Keane Foundation and the Mayor's Charity Ball have really taken on the hunger issue," Bagley said.

"Chartwells Food Service has been wonderful to us," Texeira added.

Chartwells is a private contractor hired by the Board of Education to provide meal services in the seven public schools. It donates any excess

food to the food bank and allows the town to purchase items at a discount from its network of distributors.

Bagley also cited the Hunger Action Team, a group of volunteers whose efforts are coordinated by Foodshare who look for ways to feed the hungry in town. All efforts are made to eliminate the stigma many clients feel of needing to visit a food bank for their sustenance.

"We try to make it as comfortable as possible and as efficient as possible," Texeira said.

Clients are allowed to access the food bank once a month. An average of 110 are served, an increase from past years. The Foodshare mobile van comes to town twice a month to

distribute free food at the housing authority on Lancaster Road.

Another service is a clothing bank, located in town hall. This is stocked with donations of used clothing that are still in good condition and the items change based upon the season.

"We have been getting some good donations of clothing," Texeira said.

The Mayor's Charity Ball this year adopted a new initiative targeted specifically at older residents.

"We distribute commodities, surplus food. The Mayor's Charity Ball donated some funds to go directly to seniors," Texeira said.

Approximately 80 senior citizens are enrolled in a program that pro-

vides them with these commodities that include bags of fresh produce. The charity ball also is helping to fund preschool scholarships of as much as \$1,000 per child offered through the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative.

"We administer the applications through our department," Texeira said.

She and Bagley emphasized that all of these programs are staffed and organized by volunteers, not town employees. More volunteers are always welcome. **WL**

Anyone wishing to donate to town social services programs may do so at town hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. Call 860-721-2977 for additional information.



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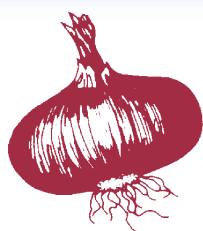
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Holiday LIFE

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Holiday LIFE



Opening the mind to gratefulness

Yoga practitioners share their tips for finding calm

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Sure, it's the most wonderful time of the year, but between the mile-long to-do list and the crowds and the cold and all the demands on your time, it can sometimes be a challenge to be grateful, even as we have a holiday that reminds us to give thanks.

If you've ever taken a yoga class and spent a few blissful moments in savasana, you probably know that yoga can calm the mind. But even yoga instructors have to deal with long lines and traffic jams.

"Yoga teaches stillness, presence; it quiets the mind. However, it is a practice, and we are all human. Sometimes my house is a mess, the kids are running around, the dog is barking; at the same time I'm trying to make dinner and the doorbell

rings. Life can be a test of patience. At that moment I have a choice. Do I scream, or can I take a deep breath and find gratitude for this crazy life of mine? So, I bring my hand to my belly and feel the breath come into my body and then exhale and focus on letting go. Again, it's a practice, and staying focused for just a few seconds can be work in the beginning, but with practice I can take control of the thoughts and come back to stillness, feeling gratitude for all of my many blessings," said Shelley Jansen, studio director of Bikram Yoga Glastonbury.

Jansen started her own yoga practice in 1998 while living in Australia. After moving back to the U.S. in 2000, she was introduced to Bikram Yoga and attended training

in Los Angeles in 2002, opening her own studio in 2003.

While Jansen said that a Yoga Asana class can be a good place to start, you can also begin in the here and now. Just go outside.

"Simply taking a walk in the woods and being very conscious of the trees and the leaves can be a perfect place to start," she added.

Richard Mercer of Bikram Yoga Simsbury in Weatogue knows a little something about stress. A former full-scholarship Division 1A college football player, he previously worked as a vice president at Travelers, running an IT division.

"I've been practicing Bikram Yoga since 2004 when I was in my late 40s. I heard about it through a friend and, although I had never done

yoga before, after my first class I knew it would be a lifelong practice," he said.

At the time, although he could lift a lot of weight, he couldn't get his arms over his head or touch his toes.

"What I found surprising, however, was the effect yoga had on relaxing my mind. I didn't realize how much I needed the brain break as well as the stretching. I convinced my [now wife] Laurie to try it with me, and she found it helped with her neck and back pain and also with handling the stress of her job. Being able to share the experience was great," he noted.

After practicing Bikram for a few years, he decided to go for teacher training, attending a nine-week, full-time teacher training in Hawaii with

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"I called Laurie and told her that this was a business; we needed to open a studio. I quit my corporate job, and we opened Bikram Yoga Simsbury in 2009. Laurie went to teacher training in 2010, so we both teach," he said.

Mercer noted the benefits are far-reaching.

"You [learn to] understand the saying, 'If you are not grateful for what you have, you'll never be grateful for what you think you want.' I thought that all there was was the business, corporate world. Opening this yoga business makes me personally grateful because I believe it saved my life and has helped so many others improve their own lives," he said.

He recommends not doing too much too soon.

"Just come in and start. Don't expect too much right away, just take your time and let it happen. A regular yoga practice allows your mind to be calm and to focus, and this creates the space for gratefulness. We always encourage our folks to appreciate the small improvements, millimeters of improvement in flexibility and strength. The peacefulness, the calmness that yoga brings, this opens the

mind to gratefulness."

Julie Starr, owner of Starr Yoga in West Hartford, also noted that the postures aren't the goal.

"The practice of yoga is just one of the eight 'paths of yoga.' The physical practice helps you feel certain things that you can then apply to situations off your mat. One of these is gratitude. When you focus on your breath in class, you feel grateful for your lungs and the air that we breathe. Every morning I am thankful to be alive and have healthy organs so I can breathe comfortably. The physical poses are challenging and remind me to be thankful for my body and its ability to do the poses. When I walk my daughter to school, I am thankful that I have the ability to do so. To be able to take a yoga class and to have an hour to do something for myself, to have the means to do so, I am thankful," Starr said.

Starr said there are many paths into yoga and meditation, and you can start small. She recommends online videos for those nervous to take a class right away, such as YogaGlo, or meditation apps such as Insight Timer and Buddhify.

"The simplest way I find to bring more gratitude in one's life is to remind yourself how lucky and

thankful you are. Repeat a simple mantra when you wake up or every time you look in the mirror. It can be as simple as 'Life is good.' In life, we get back what we give out. Practice gratitude and you will receive gratitude from the world around you."

Gina Uricchio, a Rocky Hill resident who teaches at Live Right Wellness in Old Wethersfield, has been practicing for more than 15 years.

"It's a daily essential piece of my day that incorporates movement and meditation," she said. "My practice keeps me grounded and able to trust my journey in this world and that all is unfolding as it should. Practicing gratitude every day naturally changes your vibration and moods instantly. Just saying thank you is enough."

It's not that she doesn't have her challenges. She even found a way to do yoga in bed while recovering following a mastectomy.

"If I can say thank you, even if it's for the cup of coffee I'm drinking, it immediately changes my vibration. With my yoga practice I can easily bring my nervous system to a state of balance, which in turn helps me manage my emotions," she said.

Lisa Romano, who opened Glastonbury Barre and Yoga in April

2016, has only been practicing yoga for a few years.

"It was a transformative experience that went beyond the physical," she said.

Yoga helps her count her blessings, which can set the tone for the day.

She said that this is especially important when life is less than ideal.

"For people who are going through difficult times, being able to take an hour for themselves to notice their breath and their body, this might be the only time of the day to practice self-care. People often have a difficult time taking time for themselves, and dedicating an hour on the schedule to yoga solves that. Oftentimes, the practice of yoga is combined with journaling, visualization and meditation," Romano said.

"For me, personally, yoga has taught me that in any stressful situation, my breath is vital to staying in control. ... We are all going to experience traveling hassles, traffic, or bad news. Deep breathing and stretching instantly calm you down. And for that life lesson, I am grateful." **WL**

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Holiday LIFE

Raising *grateful children* this season and all year long

by Alicia B. Smith
LIFE Staff

The holiday time rings in a number of lovely, fun and exciting events and traditions, from decorating, baking and family visits, to religious observances and anticipation.

There is an underside to all of this good cheer, for along with all of the holiday hoopla this time of year can put an emphasis on one's sense of entitlement, and the "I want" and "give me" yearnings can be overwhelm-

ing, especially for children who are looking forward to a visit from Santa Claus or to see what may arrive for Hanukkah.

Instilling a sense of gratitude in children is possible and should be a year-round endeavor.

One of the ways to counter this seemingly me-only attitude is action. Getting children involved in activities and events outside of their circle and daily life helps them to learn that not everyone is as fortunate as they may be and, by working to improve the lives of others, they can

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learn to be grateful for what they have.

Students at Morley School in West Hartford participate in two annual events that help to foster a sense of community. In the fall, the entire school works to collect non-perishable food items for their Red Wagon Food Drive, a tradition that goes back more than 20 years. Just before Thanksgiving, students and staff wheel several red wagons full of items that have been collected and deliver them to the local food bank. In the spring, for the past 10 years, another parade of goods takes place, the Backpack Brigade. This time, students and staff collect new backpacks and school supplies, and once again deliver them to the town in order for them to be distributed to students in need over the summer months.

Since arriving as principal six years ago, Ryan Cleary has seen a third charitable effort begin. For the last year and a half, the school has developed a relationship with a sister

school in Haiti.

"That idea was born out of an effort to have an authentic cultural experience," Cleary said.

The focus, initially, was to collect art supplies for students in Haiti and

when they leave Morley, to use their talents to be active and engaged in the community. The cool thing is students build a lot of perspective and that is where the gratitude comes in."

"As we drop off

"As we drop off food at the pantry or look at a school in a third world country, the kids develop a real appreciation for the things they have in their own lives."

- Ryan Cleary

has broadened to assist in other ways as well.

"The reason we do all of those things is we have kids and families here with a tremendous amount of talent and a tremendous amount of compassion for the people around them," Cleary said. "We want them,

Cleary continued. "In helping each other, they are learning how much it means to be around others, share happy moments; they see the different situations other kids and families are in [and] it makes them celebrate together in a more meaningful way."

With the Haiti program, which includes kindergartners through second-graders, Cleary said he has seen students recognizing the differences between their school and the one with which they are partnering.

He has heard them comment on how many books they have in their classrooms compared to what they've seen at the other school when they Skype with students in Haiti.

"Kids are having real conversations about how isn't it great we have these things and we are so fortunate to be in this spot. Kids in Haiti have no art supplies, no walls, no books in the language they speak. That was a new shift in student thinking," Cleary said.



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"It certainly raised awareness of the situation and at the same time it created a sense of gratitude for the things we have."

While these three programs were developed at the school, Cleary said they have inspired students to do other things on their own to help make the world better. Some students have organized a fundraiser to raise money for cancer, and even the student council developed events.

The work the students have done has spread outside of the school, too, and Cleary said, during the distribution events of food and backpacks, there might be 150 students delivering the items and about 100 parents helping.

"That's the power of community," he said. "It's fantastic to see families engaged in this work right alongside their kids. What great modeling it is for the children, to see parents involved."

For many families the season's focus is on their faith, which can be

an enormous source of inspiration and help to put life in perspective.

The Rev. Linda Spiers at Trinity Episcopal Church in Collinsville said for many Christians, Advent, the time leading up to the arrival of Christ on Christmas, is a period of slowing things down.

"Our liturgy slows down a bit, it's a bit more contemplative," she said.

"It's totally opposite of what the secular world tells us to do. It's fast-paced, people are decorating their homes, it's frenetic. The season of Advent is meant to slow us down, to help us think about the real meaning of the season."

Throughout the season, the church has events planned to help children and adults do more thinking. Parishioners of all ages will be asked to write down on a slip of paper what the "deep yearnings of their heart would be," and place the paper in an empty manger, which

will be brought forth in the offering during the service as a way to give thanks for all they have in their lives.

The church also will provide blank Christmas cards for children to draw on or write a note, which will be later sent out to those who are homebound.

The church also collects new socks to be distributed to Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford for its Church Street Eats program, which provides meals and clothing to the homeless.

"All of those things are giving children an opportunity and adults to really seriously think about the season of Advent versus what I want for Christmas," Spiers said. "They are thinking outside of themselves."

While the holiday season often inspires people to do good deeds, the needs are year-round, and Spiers encourages families to think of ways to help their children understand they can help at any time.

"Maybe it's just a prayer to give thanks for the food they have or to remember those who don't have any food on this day," Spiers said.

"Maybe it's just a conversation at the dinner table about what I am grateful for today, what happened today that makes me really grateful, see what happens in that conversation," she said.

"Setting time aside to have that conversation can be a challenge because not all families get to sit down for a meal together each night."

The focus on thoughts of gratitude does not have to be huge, complicated events, Spiers said.

While everyone wants peace in the world, just as important are things that occur in our daily lives. Maybe a child wants to pay more attention to their work in school, or make a resolution to get their homework done, or notice when someone else needs help. **WL**



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Holiday LIFE

Giving thanks across faith traditions

by Allie Rivera
LIFE Staff

With Thanksgiving rapidly approaching, many people take the time to pause and reflect on their gratitude. In various faith and cultural groups throughout Connecticut, the concept of gratitude is an important element of practice throughout the whole year.

"Amidah is one of the central prayers that we have in Judaism,"

explained Cantor Lauren Phillips of Congregation Beth Israel in West Hartford. "It's made up of a series of blessings. One of the blessings is the Modin prayer, this blessing of thanksgiving."

Phillips explained that the blessings said change depending on the day on which it is said, however the Modin remains constant.

"It's always included, no matter

when we're saying this prayer," she said.

According to Phillips, the concept of gratitude remains important in the faith throughout the year in that it strengthens the relationship with God.

"We incorporate a constant gratitude," she said. "We offer things to God at all times of day."

Though gratitude remains the

constant in the faith, Phillips said that that thankfulness goes hand-in-hand with another concept.

"The prayer for peace comes right after the prayer for gratitude," she said. "It reminds us not to take things for granted and to be grateful for the blessing that we have in life."

In Judaism, the other central holiday for gratitude came about in early October with Sukkot, a week-

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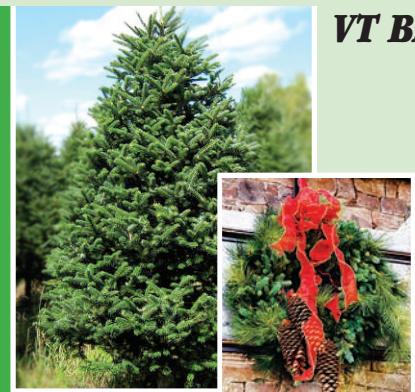
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Holiday LIFE

long tradition that commemorates the harvest.

"We build temporary huts called Sukkahs, and we eat our meals in them. Some people even choose to sleep in them," Phillips said. "By building these temporary structures and eating our meals in them, it reminds us that, when we emerge from the Sukkah, we remember how lucky we are to have these dwellings."

Tessa Beauregard, associate pastor at the First Church of Christ in Wethersfield, said the concept of gratitude is similarly important in her faith.

"Thanksgiving is an important virtue for Christians in our tradition," she said. "It's connecting the peace of God with our attitude of thanksgiving and gratitude."

According to Beauregard, practicing true gratitude for all that God has provided is not only a challenge, but often a sacrifice.

"We call thanksgiving a sacrifice," she said. "To bring yourself to a place of gratitude is hard. You're aligning your heart with the heart of God."

Though that work may be difficult, Beauregard stressed that it is important in her faith to do so.

"God says in the psalms that that sacrifice is more pleasing to him

than the Old Testament sacrifice of animals," she said.

"Whatever is happening in our lives, the attitude of gratitude is important to God."

In her own experience, Beauregard said she has found that not practicing gratitude also leads

the many good things that we do have. It's kind of a mental health thing as well. It's part of our faith, but like all matters of faith, there's something practical that comes out of it."

That idea of mindful gratitude throughout daily life is a key element

that's been done," she said. "I just feel like everything is a potential gift. Every person that comes into your life, every situation you encounter, there's something to be learned from everything."

While Buddhism, like most other religions, has a wide variety of practices within the faith, Simpson explained that the overall goal is to practice mindfulness at all times.

"It's an openhearted approach to everything one encounters in life," she said. "Being grateful for all of it is a side effect to the openheartedness."

Though the faith does not have specific prayers for those practicing to say, Simpson said that, through practice, life can become like a prayer.

"That openness and receptivity is part of everything that we do. In a way, I guess that's a prayer," she said. "You realize things in their essence the more mindful you are, so it becomes like a prayer."

Simpson, who has been practicing Buddhism for nearly two decades, said the faith's focus on being open to anything that comes along can only lead to gratitude.

"It's really a reverence for anything that comes our way," she said. "Anyone and anything has value that can teach. We become more appreciative as we go along." WL

**"It's really a reverence
for anything that comes our way.
Anyone and anything has value
that can teach. We become more
appreciative as we go along."**

-Kathy Simpson

to unhappiness.

"I've noticed in myself when I go through times when I forget to be thankful and I put my focus on what's wrong, that breeds a kind of discontentment or disgruntlement," she said. "That thankfulness is a really practical way of focusing on

of Buddhism as well. Kathy Simpson, a community dharma leader in West Simsbury, explained that the faith focuses on an open-mindedness that allows gratitude to flourish.

"With Buddhism there's kindness, doing a kindness for another and being grateful for a kindness


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Stylish approach

New company features beautiful bags with an eye toward giving back

by Mara Dresner

Staff Writer

Carla Donza always remembers being inspired by beautiful things.

"I grew up in a very creative family. My father had an interior design company; my mom was a buyer for Lord & Taylor. I was always fascinated by textiles and fabrics and style and design," Donza said.

After graduating from Wethersfield High School, she lived and worked in Boston for a number of years doing event planning for General Cinema before returning to Connecticut to work at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. For more than 15 years, she worked as an event plan-

ner and trade show manager, organizing events all over the world.

"I saw so many great places that I was so lucky to see," she said.

When she had a little spare time, she indulged in her love of shopping, from London's Carnaby Street to Istanbul's Grand Bazaar Market to Greenwich Village. While she enjoyed her job, she was ready for a change.

"I made a big decision to leave last year. It was a very long thought-

After working in event planning for a number of years, Carla Donza, a Wethersfield native and Glastonbury resident, has launched Bagavond. It features unique artisan handbags.



Photo by Mara Dresner

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out decision. I have an entrepreneurial spirit. I wanted to see what I can do on my own," Donza said.

While she does have a small events planning company, she also wanted to start something new.

"What I wanted to do was think of a different kind of event experience. I'm really passionate about the food and beverage industry. I started researching wine tasting events," she said, including events that paired wine and spirits with designer shoes.

She found the liquor laws challenging to get a business like that up and running and also saw potential issues with managing the inventory for the shoe sizes. But she found her interest piqued.

"I began to research some of these other items," she said. "So many women love handbags; I do. I thought it might be an easier product to touch and hold."

Donza launched her company, Bagavond, in September after almost six months of research. Choosing the bags for the launch was an enjoyable task.

"I was having so much fun, con-

tacting all of these incredible designers, finalists and winners from [Independent] Handbag Designer Awards. Some are very established, some are up and coming. They all have a very unique story to tell," she said.

The designers come from all over the world. She features a wide variety of sizes and styles, such as weekender bags, clutches, tote bags and backpacks in a variety of colors and designs. All are handmade.

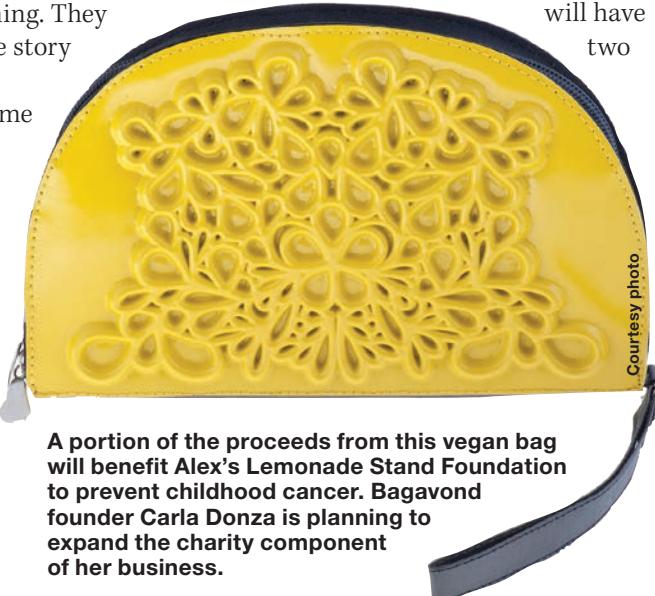
"We sell globally unique handbags from independent designers from all over the world. I'm trying to target women who are very stylish and want something different than Prada and Louis Vuitton, that are very fashion forward and unique and affordable," Donza said.

"The criteria is that they're not mass produced, they're one of a kind,

handcrafted."

Some have other special qualities, such as being vegan.

Bagavond will have two



A portion of the proceeds from this vegan bag will benefit Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation to prevent childhood cancer. Bagavond founder Carla Donza is planning to expand the charity component of her business.

components; the first is the e-commerce part. The second piece, events, is in the works.

"We are starting to put together a plan for home-based parties. We can set up a party at your home. We can work with caterers if want to

have the whole experience. We can do private events, any kind of fund-raising organization or corporate event," she said.

The company's name is a play on the word, vagabond, and the motto is "Carry Your Wanderlust."

Donza also has a charity component to her business. Five dollars from every MeDusa Dori Yellow Wristlet sold will be donated to the Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, which raises money and awareness of childhood cancer causes. The MeDusa line is a vegan line from Israel and the purse looks like a slice of lemon.

"I'm really excited about that," Donza said.

"The ongoing plan is to add more designers and add more charities. I'm looking at different agreements with different charities. Giving back totally matters; I think it's the right thing to do. If you're fortunate enough to be able to purchase something beautiful, I think it makes sense to help someone else out."

Donza doesn't play favorites

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Bagavond features styles in many sizes, designs and colors.

when it comes to her own tastes in handbags.

"It depends on my mood. I think they're all so special and so different. It depends on the function and the mood I'm in. I really don't have a favorite; it really depends on the day," she said.

Most of her customers do have favorites. Susan Morin of Boston recently purchased a MeDusa clutch with a chain strap.

"It's vegan, but that's not really why I bought it. It's just so striking looking to me. I love the chain and I love the size. I never had a vegan purse. I got it more for the style; that was a bonus," she said.

Morin is impressed with what Donza is trying to do.

"I love it. I love fashion. I'm a person who subscribed to Vogue magazine for years. One item I adore for accessories is handbags. I typically shop Coach and Kate Spade. The incredible thing about Bagavond is I've never seen so many different and unique and just unbelievably well-made bags from all over the world," she said.

"I was just blown away by it.

“There are several I have my eye on gifts with the holidays coming. They’ve been curated for you. You’re more than likely to buy a bag that no one else is going to have,” she added.

"I've bought [bags] that were a lot more expensive for something that is manufactured for the masses. This is very well curated and you're going to find something no one else has."

Donza is looking forward to developing additional partnerships with both artisans and charities.

"Our ideal clients are fashion-forward with a stylish eye for well-made, unique items. We offer the space in between the investment bag that includes a lot of commas and the cheap novelty bags that last a short while. The bonus is knowing that our clients are carrying a handbag that has made a difference," she said.

"[I want] to encourage women to feel special and distinctive in this global world and to be inspired while helping those in need. Giving back is always in style." **WL**

Learn more at bagavond.com.

“Our ideal clients are fashion-forward with a stylish eye for well-made, unique items.

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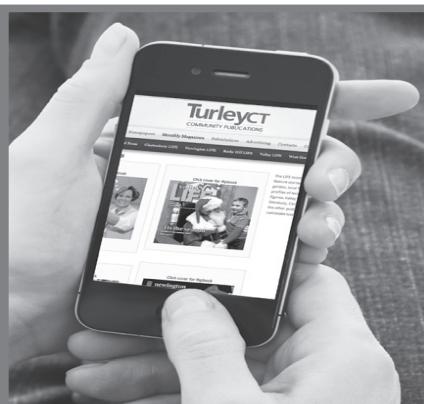
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El Pollo Guapo

Restaurant for fast and fresh food opens its doors

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Nestled within a busy stretch of the Berlin Turnpike, El Pollo Guapo is at first easy to miss, but for the restaurant's crowd of regulars it has become a common destination.

Opened earlier this year, the take-out eatery operates under the principle that it's best to have one concentration and to do it well.

"We serve chicken. Everything goes back to that rotisserie," co-owner and Executive Chef Roy Riedl said. "We basically sell chicken, rice, sauce and pickled onions. Pretty much everything gets created around that."

Owned by the husband-wife duo of Roy and Heather Riedl, El Pollo Guapo is not their first foray into the

culinary world. Along with their new storefront, they also own and operate a food truck and catering business.

"We started our business in 2014," Heather said. "We started as catering, then we opened the food truck, now this."

Generally operating around Bushnell Park in Hartford, the truck has also made frequent stops at the Coventry Farmers Market and the Wethersfield Farmers Market, but its menu is vastly different from El Pollo Guapo.

"We do primarily pork there, actually," Heather said.

"Our food truck is Spanish cuisine," Roy explained. "It's mostly tapas and appetizer-sized portions. It would be hard to open up a store-

front with our concept from the food truck."

Seeing the need for a commercial kitchen, the Riedls began searching for both a permanent location and a new concept for a restaurant.

"We saw this location and the idea kind of came to us," Heather said. "We wanted to create something for people's on-the-go lifestyle."

The location seemed like an ideal spot that would require little remodeling but the owners quickly discovered some challenges.

"We signed our lease in February and I think we anticipated we would open by April, maybe May," Heather recalled. "It needed a serious overhaul. Once we really got in here we

"We're really a from-scratch kitchen. When you come here, you can feel good about eating it and feeding it to your family."

- Heather Riedl

realized we had to reconfigure and redo everything in the space."

The completely renovated location holds about 10 seats plus a couple picnic tables outside, which the Riedls said fits with their current concept of mostly creating food to go.

"It's good food that's on the go," Roy said.

That idea of providing quality food is extremely important to both owners. Nearly everything in their restaurant is freshly prepared.

"They're getting real food. We get raw ingredients in and we trans-

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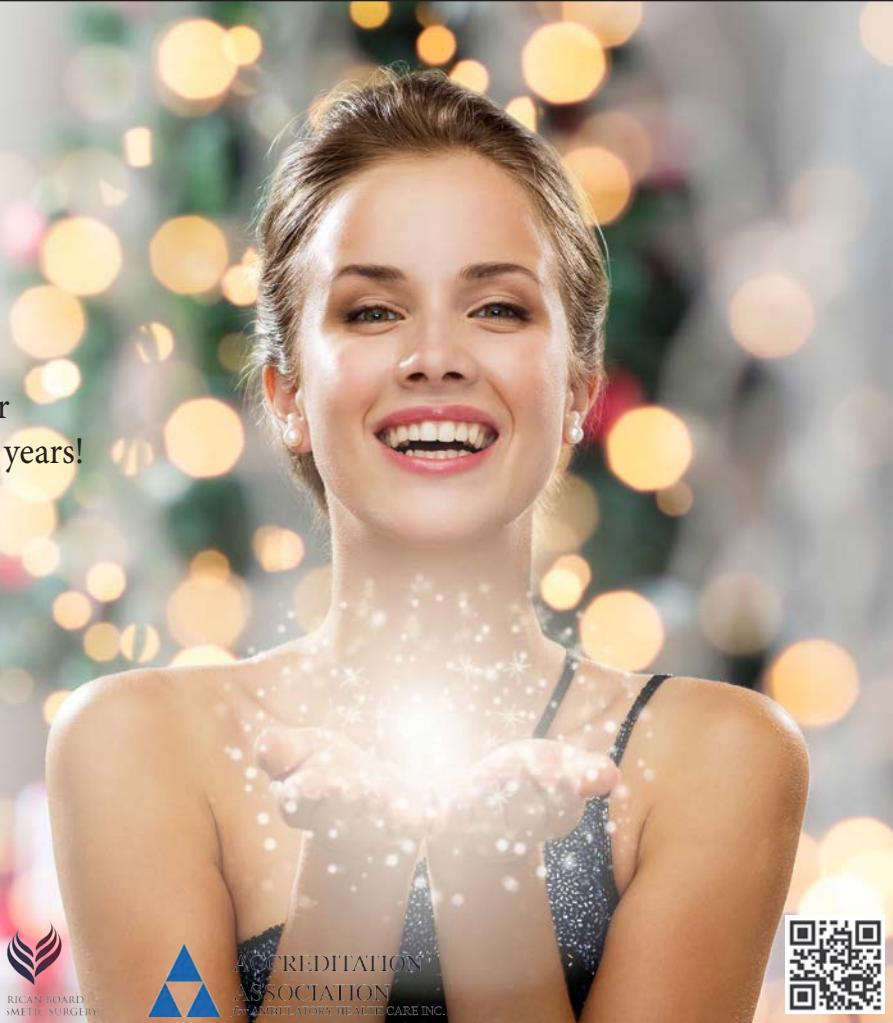
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form it," Roy said. "Everything is done daily. Ketchup packets are pretty much the only thing we get pre-prepared."

The goal for these parents and Glastonbury residents is to provide quick and healthy meals for the entire family. Much of their menu can be served family style.

"You don't want to be serving your kids fast food every night," Roy said.

"We really wanted to make this food approachable for everyone," Heather added. "We wanted it to be something that anybody can go to."

The primary focus may be rotisserie chicken but they described their style as a fusion of different Spanish and Latin tastes merging the flavors of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Peru and the Caribbean.

"We have arroz con pollo (chicken and rice) and that was always our biggest seller," Heather said.

Although the food has a combination of Spanish-inspired flavors, Roy said that they are not aiming to serve genuine Spanish food, but a new style inspired by other dishes.

"You're not going to come in here and compare it to your grandmother's plantanos" (plantains), he said.

The storefront may still be in its infancy, but they are already looking to the future.



Courtesy photo

Town officials and Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce representatives cut the ribbon to welcome El Pollo Guapo to the Berlin Turnpike.

"Both of us are the type of people who take on a project any time we have down time," Heather said with a laugh.

"In the future, we'd love to have a space where families can come and take their kids and hang out. Still fast, still counter service, but they can choose to either hang out and get comfortable if they want or take it to go."

Roy is excited to expand the company's catering options now that

they have a commercial kitchen. He also hopes to expand El Pollo Guapo outside of Wethersfield.

"The plan for Guapo is to have multiple units," he said. "I think it's something that can be successful."

The Riedls are grateful to the community for the support they have already received and are glad that their decision to locate here was a positive choice.

"It's a loyal community," Roy said. "It seems the community is

really tight knit. We have people who come here every single day already."

They hope they have provided a place for local people and families to get quality food on the go.

"We're really a from-scratch kitchen," Heather said. "When you come here, you can feel good about eating it and feeding it to your family." **WL**

El Pollo Guapo is located at 1866 Berlin Turnpike. It can be reached at 860-436-4982 or online at elpolloguapo.com.

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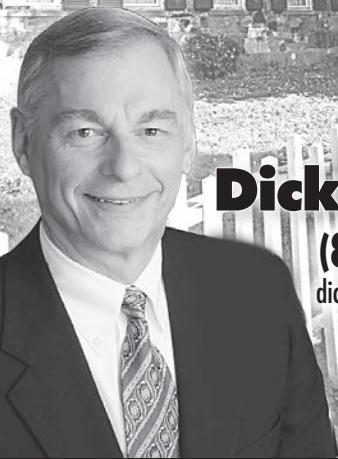
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It's not too late

Year-end moves can help save money on 2018 taxes

by Mark Jahne

Editor

There are only two months left in calendar year 2017, probably not enough time to do anything meaningful to reduce the tax burden that will be faced come April 15 of next year.

That might be the feeling, but it's not necessarily the truth. There's plenty an individual taxpayer can do, especially if he or she has a little extra money to dedicate to tax savings.

Hartford area certified public accountants offered a variety of suggestions for ways to reduce the tax burden. They all agreed that an individual's actions will vary depending upon personal income and other factors.

"There's always stuff you can do," Vinny Fanelli, tax manager with Fiondella, Milone & LaSaracina LLP in Glastonbury, said.

A maximum of \$5,500 a year can be contributed to an Individual Retirement Account. Those with Health Savings Accounts can add more money at the end of the year.

"That's tax free for federal taxes and Medicare taxes," Fanelli said.

People who hold a 401K retirement account can contribute as much as \$18,000 annually to that account. If they are expecting that their income may increase in 2018 he advised paying real estate property taxes by Dec. 31 and not waiting until January of a new tax year.

Self-employed people and others who pay quarterly state taxes can make the payment that is due on Jan. 15 before Dec. 31 to achieve savings. This can also have a secondary benefit in terms of itemized deductions.

"Charitable contributions is always a big one," Fanelli said.

Many people forget to report such legitimate deductions as charitable golf tournaments, clothing donated to charity, and the like. He encourages everyone to talk to a certified public accountant and a broker or financial planner, if they have one, for further advice.

"Maximize those things that can really save you money that are easy to do," Pamela Weaver of Avon said.

She is in business for herself and has many years of accounting experience. Weaver suggested making charitable donations if you are a taxpayer who itemizes deductions.

Make sure to get a receipt for any clothing or other items that are donated to charity, she added. It's also a good idea to take stock of any possible medical expenses that are deductible.

"People don't realize that they can take their long-term care premiums, or at least a portion of them," Weaver said.

Some legal fees are also tax deductible. Other things to consider are the costs of tax planning, tax preparation, uniforms and union dues. She advises paying real estate taxes twice a year and not paying once in a given year and three times in another.

Those who hold stock or other investments would be wise to speak with a financial advisor to get a sense of losses and gains.

"Now might be the time to harvest some of the losses" to offset gains that would increase taxes, she said.

"If you've had a major life event ... it changes your tax structure. Try to avoid surprises in April," Weaver said.

There are two primary components to tax planning, said Thomas Marien, a partner in the Wethersfield office of PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP. The first is to postpone or defer revenue and the second is to accelerate deductions.

"We look at it from that perspective," he said.

He suggests increasing contributions to retirement accounts and deferring bonuses to the following year if one is able to do so. Those who hold IRAs can have the trustees of those accounts make additional contributions on behalf of their clients to qualified charitable organizations.

"If you have a stock that's a loser you can take up to \$3,000 of that loss in the current year," he added.

Like other CPAs, he is waiting to see what comes out of the tax reform debate in Washington, D.C.

"We do expect to have lower tax rates, one way or another," Marien said.

"The hard part here is that there's a potential tax law change coming, but nobody knows if or when. There's a wait-and-see approach to that," Kenneth Kron said.

He is with the Glastonbury office of MahoneySabol.

Kron said some people may want to act to take advantage of what they expect will be a more favorable tax rate in 2018. This works best for those in upper-income levels.

"Deferring income has always been a favorable tax strategy" he said. "Make sure that you are maximizing your retirement contributions."

Like the others, he recommends making charitable donations for those who itemize as well as paying real estate property taxes prior to Dec. 31. That same time frame holds true for estimated tax payments to the state of Connecticut.

Kron also said it is wise to consult a professional to deal with any capital gains and/or losses. **WL**

All of the people quoted in this story are members of the Connecticut Society of CPAs.

Academy exhibits its artwork



"Ephemera" by Tyler Barry



"Things Are Looking Up" by Alexander Ranniello



"The Frog Prince" by Katie Runde



Animals were a popular theme for numerous artworks.

Photos by Mark Jahne

The Wethersfield Academy for the Arts held its biennial juried Fine Art Show Oct. 7-21 at the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center. Douglas Hyland, retired director of the New Britain Museum of American Art, was the juror.

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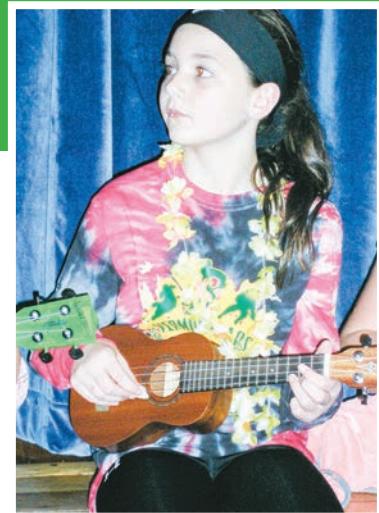


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Members of the Ukulele Club at Emerson-Williams School sit on the stage while strumming a tune. The chords are projected onto a wall.

Gabriella "Gabby" Carbo, a sixth-grader, is focused upon her playing.

LIFE *in the classroom*

G

Enter the humble ukulele. The small, stringed instrument of Hawaiian fame and Portuguese origins has four strings and only requires learning a modest number of chords to play.

Less than two months ago, the school formed a Ukulele Club for students interested in giving the instrument a try. Inexpensive plastic uk-

uleles were purchased and simple sheet music was downloaded and is displayed on a wall for everyone to follow.

Anyone in grades 3-6 is welcome to participate. The first session recently ended and more are forthcoming. Twenty-one young musicians, including two with special needs, took part in a recent concert for parents, grandparents and other invited guests.

They wore floral leis while performing and kept in step with one another while showcasing their skills on increasingly more complicated songs. They also took a break and handed off their instruments to the adults in the audience, with a few

brief instructions on how to play.

Suffice it to say the sounds the students produced were better. They are led by Emily Caravella, the instrumental music teacher.

Songs included such familiar tunes as "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," "Count on Me" and "Don't Worry, Be Happy." For the most part, the students focused on strumming their chords and let the recorded music handle the vocals.

The Richard M. Keane Foundation underwrites this club as part of its Keane After School Enrichment Program. Students also pay a modest fee to participate. Caravella said the instruments were funded by grant money and the

Donors Choose crowd-funding website.

Judy Keane of the Keane Foundation was among the audience members who came to hear the students play and she was delighted.

Sixth-graders Sarah Morrissey and Sam Corwin explained what attracted them to this activity. They both like music.

"It's fun and a lot of kids I know are doing it," Sam said.

He also plays the drums and wanted a different experience.

"My mom plays it, so she owns one," Sarah said.

She previously tried guitar, but gave it up after a while. Ukulele music has reinvigorated her interest

Sixth-grader Emily Perrotta and third-graders Evan Mainville and Abram Cowles are learning to make ukulele music.

Hayden Raccagni and Paxton Smith closely follow the sheet music displayed on the wall.



Principal Neela Thakur records the concert on her smartphone.



Photos by Mark Jahne

in playing a string instrument.

Sam said the first few weeks were rather shaky, but then everyone improved their skills, mastered the chords and learned how to play as an ensemble.

"We all listen to each other now," Sarah added.

At one point during the concert, Caravella needed to go behind the stage to adjust the audio volume. A new song started on the computer and, rather than wait for her return, the older students made eye contact and started playing the tune themselves, with everyone else quickly joining in.

"I am unbelievably impressed with this group," Caravella told the audience. "A lot of them want to start singing and playing" and that was not part of the original plan.

The performance was so good that several parents requested an additional song and the delighted students were thrilled to provide it. They also performed at a recent meeting of the Board of Education.

The Ukulele Club meets once a week for six weeks and then a new session begins. The teacher sees it as a nice offshoot from her other lessons.

"I teach fourth to sixth grade instrumental.

It's all about leadership in instrumental music," Caravella said.

That equates to more than 160 students. Many of them play multiple instruments. She wants to offer the ukulele to as many students as possible.

Adding third-graders to the mix was something new for her. She credits their willingness to learn and the leadership of the older students for making that effort successful. She also credits the support of parents.

"It gives the third-graders an introduction to what instrumental music would be like," she said.

Most of the students learn the finger positioning on the strings to produce the desired chords. Those who struggle can use push button adapters and that way everyone enjoys some degree of success and accomplishment.

Many of them practice on their own time at home.

Caravella played the instrument during her own school days.

"These kids have asked for extra homework every week," she said. "We have more pieces, harder rhythms." WL



Teacher Emily Caravella owns a classic wooden ukulele.

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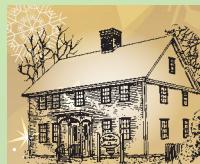
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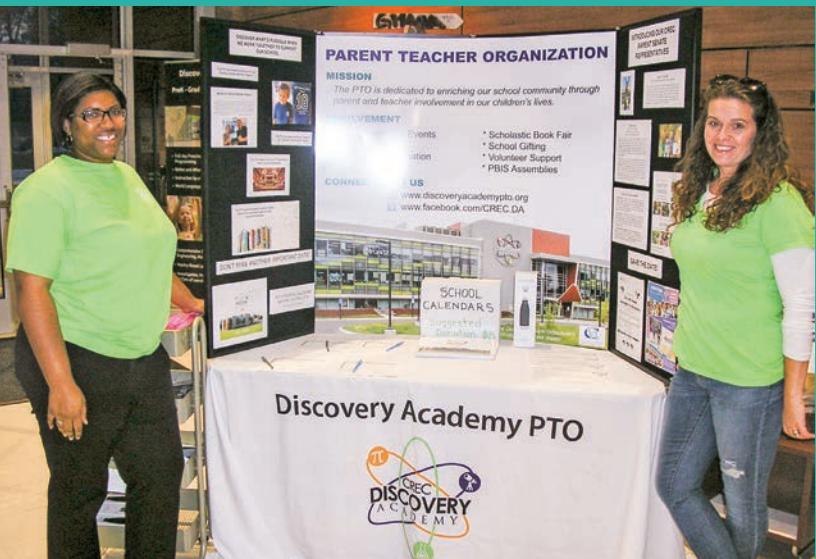


Usha Thakran and Nirvaan Thakran take on the egg stand challenge.

Photos by Mark Jahne



Eric "EJ" Velez of Wethersfield takes a ride on a hovercraft that engineering students from the University of Connecticut brought to the event.



PTO members Taneta McCaw and Kristin LaBar-Slocki stand by the school's display table in the main lobby.

Serving up STEM

Students explore the world together at CREC Discovery Academy

by Mark Jahne

Editor

Students and families experienced a night of learning and more at the CREC Discovery Academy's annual STEM Night program. There were a variety of activities for all to enjoy.

It was all part of "Exploring Our World Together," the school's annual STEM night held Nov. 2. The magnet elementary school, run by the Capitol Region Education Council, draws students from all over central and northern Connecticut.

"We are a STEM-themed school," Principal Kurt Stanco said as he greeted the families.

He sees the evening as an opportunity for families to experience the school's theme at all different levels with plenty of hands-on activities.

"It's to celebrate our theme and to give families some hands-on time to explore together and inspire kids to go on to STEM careers," STEM Coach Clare Neseralla said.

The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) curriculum is designed to motivate students to learn and achieve in those areas.

Activities included music technology, an egg stand challenge, engineering and robotics, mad science superhero show, plotting data and graphing, microscopes and app creation, magna-tiles, cup towers, sensory

stations, lightbot programming, hour of code and quiver animation.

"Our state-of-the-art facility offers so much space to explore all that is STEM. Classrooms are packed with many activities to explore as a family," Neseralla said. "This year we expanded to include more preschool and kindergarten activities."

There were technology demonstrations throughout the building. Students of all ages showed off their skills, implemented engineering principles and used math to solve problems.

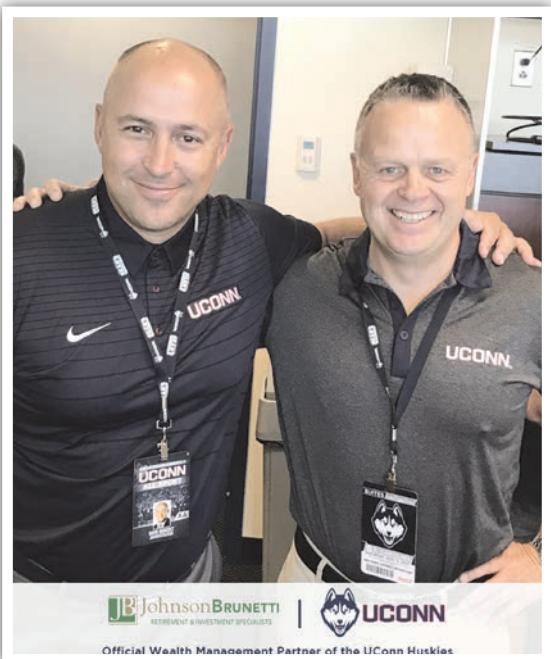
Mad Science students revealed the science behind super hero powers. Mentors from the University of Connecticut School of Engineering were on hand to serve as mentors.

WL



First-grader Julia Cohen is delighted to grab a huge mound of shaving cream at one of the sensory stations.

Business notes



Johnson Brunetti has entered into a partnership with the University of Connecticut Athletic

Department to become the official wealth management partner of the UConn Huskies. Celebrating the partnership at Rentschler Field are UConn Athletic Director David Benedict, left, and Joel Johnson, Johnson Brunetti managing partner.

The Chipotle Mexican Grill chain recently opened a new restaurant at 1084 Silas Deane Highway. It is open from 10:45 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week.

Cheek's Chicken & Waffles, another national chain, is now open at 740 Silas Deane Highway, serving chicken with a Southern flair.

The Wethersfield Dental Group performed free dental services for military veterans as part of the "Terrific Teeth for the Troops" event. Seven veterans received a comprehensive exam, X-rays and a regular cleaning. Shown are Dr. Ukti Phadnis and Raymond Russell, a U.S. Army veteran. **WL**



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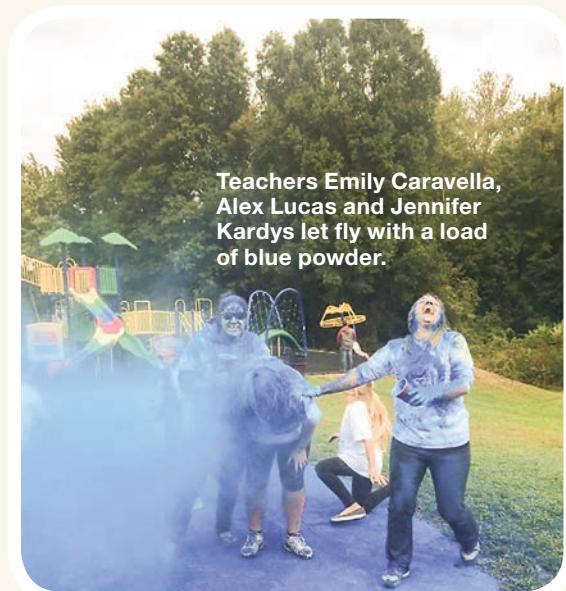
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These students don't seem to mind being covered with green holi powder, made from corn starch.



Teachers Emily Caravella, Alex Lucas and Jennifer Kardys let fly with a load of blue powder.



Courtesy photos

Plenty of color

The Emerson-Williams School PTO hosted The Tiger Trot, a color run event sponsored by the Richard M. Keane Foundation. A committee led by Autumn Struk organized the event.

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Molly Rathbun '12
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Molly is the head softball coach and sports psychology coordinator at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania. "Being a student-athlete taught me about commitment and camaraderie, and showed me the importance of staying in the moment and focusing on the little things."



Jennifer Wolff '12
Early Childhood Education
Teacher, Cook Hill Elementary School
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"I transferred to Eastern after discovering the phenomenal opportunities available in the Center for Early Childhood Education. My professors and the early childhood program provided me with so many ways to be involved in research, helping me to gain priceless experience in the field of education."



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Focusing on children

WECC annual meeting highlights progress

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Studies have shown the value of giving even the smallest children every early advantage in life. They also show what happens if children do not get those advantages, particularly a preschool experience.

That's a big reason why the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative was formed many years ago. Its stated goal is to ensure that all town children from birth to 8 are healthy, developmentally successful learners who are involved in their community.

The collaborative held its annual meeting Oct. 23 to highlight the achievements of the past year. There was plenty to share, starting with work being done utilizing grant money.

"We are in our second year of our Hartford Foundation for Public Giving grant," Co-Chairman Kimberly Bobin said. "A new thing we did this year was preschool scholarships."

WECC recently launched a comprehensive website at wethersfieldearlychildhood.com. It combines a wide array of resources in one location.

"We received a \$50,000 federal grant to launch a two-generation family program," Bobin added.

Participants meet three times a week for three hours each day. The program is a partnership that includes the local YMCA and Wethersfield Public Schools.

"We did a smaller version of the program this summer," she said.

A transition to kindergarten program helped ease the separation anxiety for both little children and their parents. Richard Sussman, director of early childhood investments for the Hartford Foundation, was in attendance and spoke about

his organization's support of WECC.

"This is an experiment for us," he said. "This is just the kind of pilot the Hartford Foundation wants to be involved in."

Sussman added that the foundation is pleased to see what WECC and the town are doing thus far with its money. It is important to pay attention to the overall growth and development of every child and having so many agencies working collaboratively is both praiseworthy and unusual.

"You're way ahead of the game on that," he said.

Guest speaker Samantha Dynowski gave a data-driven presentation about infants and toddlers. She is the director of advocacy and outreach for the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance.

The CECA's goal is for every child to enter kindergarten healthy, ready to learn and prepared to enjoy success in school.

"One of our priorities is infants and toddlers," she said. "We decided to pull all the information together about infants and toddlers."

She explained that the first 1,000 days of a child's life – slightly less than three years – sets the stage for that child's future. Optimal brain development begins immediately after birth.

Dynowski said early child development programs also provide an economic benefit because the child will most likely enjoy better health and require fewer services.

"The CDC [Centers for Disease Control] estimates that one in six children have a developmental delay. The earlier you treat a delay, the less expensive and easier it is to take care of," she said.

The infant toddler population in Connecticut as of the end of 2014 was 111,000 and 44.5 percent of them are living at, or below, 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

The birth rate in this state is in steady decline. There were more than 45,000 live births in 1994, more than 42,000 in 2004 and more than 36,000 in

2014. Births to teenage mothers are steadily declining.

The racial and ethnic diversity of these children is growing. More than 28 percent of their mothers were born outside of the 50 states. More than 23 percent of these mothers are non-white, an increase of 5 percent since 1994.

The state's WIC special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children is utilized by only half of the families that qualify. There are a total of 30,096 licensed child care spaces statewide for infants and toddlers but that is only enough to handle 27 percent of the total population of such children.

WECC reports that there are more than 700 children from birth to 3 currently residing in town.

The evening ended with a panel discussion featuring three mothers who have become involved in the community in different ways. Mary Kay Jensen is Bobin's co-chairman for WECC. She is also the mother of three.

"We all want what's best for our kids. What can Wethersfield do for these families?" she asked.

Jessica Rivera shared the story of Madres Latinas, a community organization formed less than two years ago. It works to provide support and activities for families from Puerto Rico, Central America and South America, with the goal of helping them better blend into and participate in the community.

Originally from Hartford, she moved to town to ensure a better life for her family.

"The major reason I came to live in Wethersfield is because my son was of school age. My husband and I wanted a better education for him," she said.

Rivera enjoys leading Madres Latinas, meeting new people and getting connected with town activities and resources. WECC seed money helped Madres Latinas get its start.

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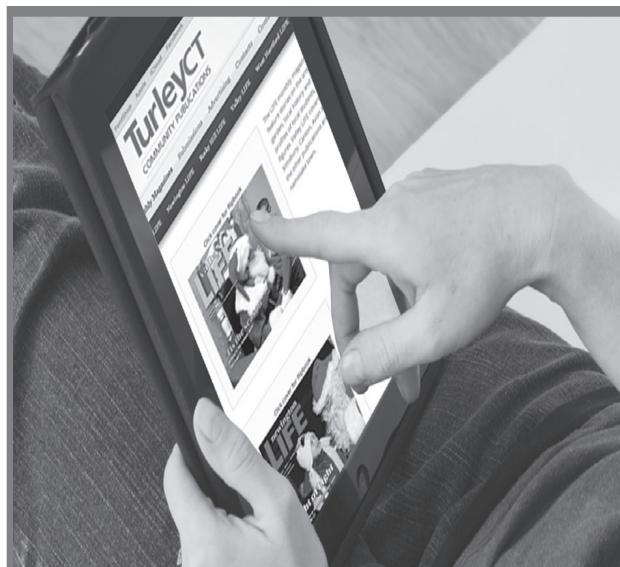


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"We're starting a Spanish language class for kindergartners and first-graders at Emerson-Williams School," she said.

Nerma Mustafic is looking to follow Rivera's model and has co-founded another group of involved parents called the Bosnian Moms of Wethersfield. Her children are ages 3 and 5.

She talked about people who look at her with disdain because she wears a scarf on her head in compliance with her culture and religion. She also spoke of experiencing prejudice and closed doors.

But Mustafic considers this town a welcoming community. She participated in the People Empowering People parent leadership training program conducted earlier this year by WECC.

"Being accepted here in Wethersfield means a lot to me," she said. "The Bosnian community in Wethersfield is new, it's young. Bosnians came here about 10 years ago."

Like Madres Latinas, Bosnian Moms of Wethersfield wants to build bridges to better connect with the wider community.

"We want people to understand who we are," Mustafic said. **WL**

For more information about WECC contact Kimberly Bobin at 860-721-2885 or kimberly.bobin@wethersfieldct.gov.



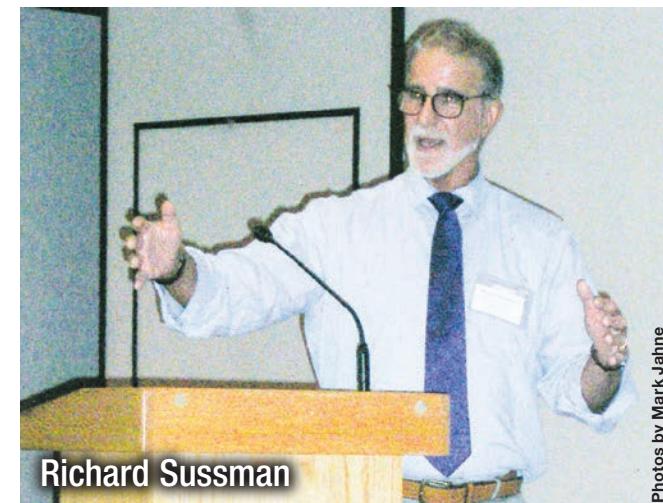
A panel discussion moderated by Jeanine Berasi, left, featured Jessica Rivera of Madres Latinas, Mary Kay Jensen (with microphone) of the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative and Nerma Mustafic of Bosnian Moms of Wethersfield.

Samantha Dynowski of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance gave a presentation on early childhood data trends.

Richard Sussman of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving praised the town for its efforts to assist preschool children.



Samantha Dynowski

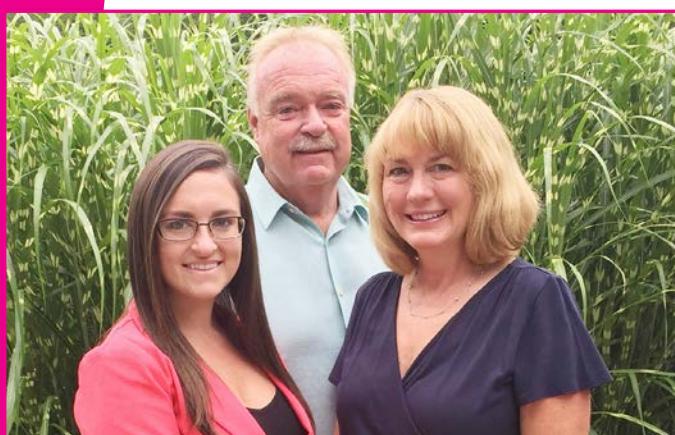


Richard Sussman

Photos by Mark Jane

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2 **Holiday Harp & Voice Concert,** 2 p.m., Wethersfield Library, 515 Silas Deane Highway, 860-257-2811 or wethersfieldlibrary.org

3 **Holiday Support Program & Service of Remembrance,** 2-4 p.m., Pitkin Community Center, 30 Greenfield St., 860-257-7635 or desopo.com

Wonders of Christmas Organ Concert, 2 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 300 Main St., 860-529-6825

Service of Seasons of Grief and Losses, 4 p.m., Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church, 511 Maple St., 860-563-8286

5 Essential Oils of the Season, 6:30 p.m., registration required, Wethersfield Library, 515 Silas Deane Highway, 860-257-2811 or wethersfieldlibrary.org

6 Teen Yoga, 2:30 p.m., for grades 7-12, registration required, Wethersfield Library, 515 Silas Deane Highway, 860-257-2811 or wethersfieldlibrary.org

7 Holidays on Main, 5-9 p.m., Main Street, Old Wethersfield, 860-721-6200 or wethersfieldchamber.com

8 Bake Sale, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 433 Fairfield Ave., Hartford, 860-956-7586, also 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 9 and 1-3 p.m. Dec. 10

Holiday Preview Party, 5 p.m., Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, 211 Main St., \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members, 860-529-0612 or webb-deane-stevens.org

9 150 Prospect Coffeehouse, 6:30 p.m., Wethersfield United Methodist

Church, 150 Prospect St., 860-614-5158 or tanjam@comcast.net

15 Christmas Cupcake Decorating for Teens, 3 p.m., registration required, Wethersfield Library, 515 Silas Deane Highway, 860-257-2811 or wethersfieldlibrary.org

16 Fire Cider Cold & Flu Remedy, 11 a.m., registration required, Wethersfield Library, 515 Silas Deane Highway, 860-257-2811 or wethersfieldlibrary.org

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

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Events

spotlight

Ye Olde Sugar Plum Fair

Nov. 18, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Trinity Episcopal Church, 300 Main St.
 860-529-6825
 This traditional holiday fair features handmade gifts, Christmas collectibles, hand-carved crosses, baked goods, books and puzzles, jewelry and special gifts, a pet boutique and poinsettias. There will also be a food court.

Holiday Light Fantasia

Nov. 23 until Jan. 1
Goodwin Park, Harford/Wethersfield
 860-742-2267
 This holiday tradition is the largest fund-raising event Channel 3 Kids Camp presents each year. The illuminated drive-through display will open on Thanksgiving Day and run through New Year's Day from 5-9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 5-10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Holiday Harp and Voice Concert

Dec. 2, 2 p.m.
Wethersfield Library
 515 Silas Deane Highway
 860-257-2811 or wethersfieldlibrary.org
 Harpist and vocalist Debbie Vinick will perform popular holiday songs, classical pieces, renaissance/Medieval songs, Christmas carols and Hanukkah songs. Her performance will end with a carol sing-a-long. Registration is required.

The Wonders of Christmas Organ Concert

Dec. 3, 2 p.m.
Trinity Episcopal Church, 300 Main St.
 860-529-6825
 Bruce Henley will play musical selections from Bach, Miller, Chapman, Dandrieu, Widor, Lind, Barber and Messiaen, as well as treasured Christmas carols. A reception will follow in the parish hall. A free-will offering will be taken to benefit the Trinity Parish Stained Glass Preservation Fund.

Holiday Support Program & Service of Remembrance

Dec. 3, 2-4 p.m.
Pitkin Community Center
 30 Greenfield St.

860-257-7635 or desopo.com

D'Esopo Funeral Chapel presents this annual program to help people who are grieving during the holiday season. Staff will share the various resources available to those needing support. This is designed as a practical and educational program and covers additional topics such as gift giving, attending events and dealing with the unexpected. It will close with a candlelight service.

Holidays on Main

Dec. 7, 5-9 p.m.
Main Street, Old Wethersfield
 860-721-6200 or wethersfieldchamber.com
 The Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce and town of Wethersfield present this annual holiday event. The evening includes a tree-lighting ceremony at 6 p.m., caroling, Santa Claus visits at the firehouse, live entertainment, fire juggling, horse and wagon rides from Heirloom Market at Comstock Ferre, a farmers market, silent auction in the Webb Barn, beer garden, crafters and food vendors.

Night of Joy Christmas Concert

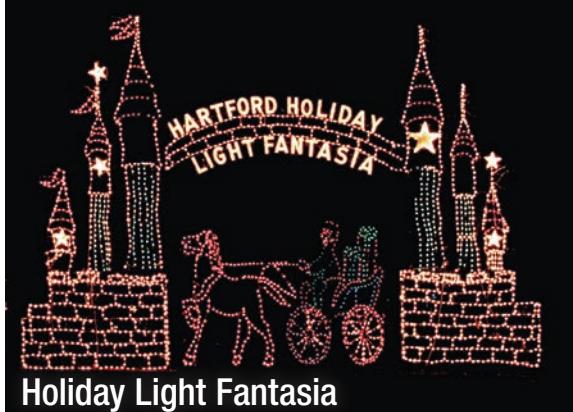
Dec. 8-10
Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church
 511 Maple St.
 860-563-8286 or wethefc.com
 Music at these concerts includes several seasonal favorites with featured performances by vocalist Kyra Culup, cellist Tori Acca and guitarist Steve Mann. Each concert is followed by a reception with holiday treats. Times are Friday at 7 p.m., Saturday at 4 and 7 p.m. and Sunday at 4 p.m. Admission is free, but tickets are required, as space is limited. The church will accept monetary donations after each concert for its Hands Open Wide food pantry.

Holiday Preview Party

Dec. 8, 5 p.m.
Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum
 211 Main St.
 860-529-0612 or webb-deane-stevens.org
 "Three Centuries of Christmas" tours recall in detail how the American holiday season evolved over the past 300 years. The 2017 season kicks off with the Holiday Preview Party. Guests will experience a candlelight preview of the decorations throughout the museum, stroll from house to



Holiday Preview Party



Holiday Light Fantasia

house to enjoy food, wine and live music, chat with Mr. and Mrs. Silas Deane, Mrs. Claus, and guides in period dress. Admission is \$30 for museum members and \$35 for non-members. Candlelight Tours with guides in period dress are scheduled for 5 p.m. Dec. 15-16.

Fire Cider Cold and Flu Remedy

Dec. 16, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Wethersfield Library
 515 Silas Deane Highway
 Come to the library to make "fire cider," a tonic revered by herbalists for its ability to help prevent cold and flu symptoms or shorten their duration if they occur. It's an apple cider vinegar infusion that contains powerful immune-boosting, anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial and anti-viral decongestant properties. Sample a variety of recipes and create your own 16-ounce jar concoction. This program is presented by Grounded Goodwife. Registration is required. **WL**

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Skippy

Inquiries about adoption may be made at the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington. Call 860-594-4500. More information, including videos, can be found online at cthumane.org. Click on "Adopt" and "Newington." The Connecticut Humane Society is a private organization and has no time limits for adoption.

Meet Skippy and Chauncey

Skippy is an adorable little Chihuahua mix. He's 8 years old and has some difficulty with his hind legs, so a home that's all on one floor is needed. Children should be 15 or older. He wants nothing to do with other dogs but might get along with a cat. Skippy has a calm demeanor but still needs daily exercise. A family with general dog experience is preferred.



Chauncey

Chauncey is a 3-year-old male American chinchilla rabbit with smooth and silky fur. He enjoys being cuddled and can live in any type of home. Children need to be gentle with him and other animals are OK as long as they are gentle, too. He would particularly enjoy the company of another rabbit.

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ROUSEPROPERTIES

Larissa Lake and Co.

**Salon and spa
brings modern edge to
Old Wethersfield**

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Sitting back in a chair on the front porch of her business, Larissa Lake looked out onto Main Street and smiled.

"You can really see how great this community is," she said, the sound of Top 40 radio wafting out from the window beside her.

As owner, stylist and makeup artist at Larissa Lake and Co. Salon and Spa, she is thrilled to see how her business has progressed since its inception in 2010, especially with its latest change, moving to its new location at 146 Main St.

"It's been two years in the making," Lake said. "The old salon was about 400 square feet. Now that we have the bigger location, we're able to do more."

Lake's path to opening her own salon and spa began before she even graduated from high school.

"I was about to graduate and I asked my parents if I could go to beauty school," she recalled. "Back then my parents were terrified and they said no, you need to go to college."

Lake attended Central Connecticut State University, majoring in entrepreneurship and marketing, but her desire to be part of the beauty industry remained. During her senior year, she had the option to either write a 50-page thesis paper or attempt to start her own business.

"Of course, I chose to start the business," she said with a laugh. "It seemed like a way better option than that paper."

With a loan from her father, she began at the Peacock in Old Saybrook, an extensive boutique that also had a beauty counter.

"That's where it all started," she said. "I did a wedding in 2004 and I was hooked. I said that's what I want to do. I want to start a beauty business."

Lake continued to work toward her goal of entering the beauty industry, but when the economy crashed in the following years, the dream started to shift.

"The economy tanked and I got a taste of reality," she said.

It was during that rocky time that she met her future husband and he ended up being one of her biggest supporters.

"He said to me, 'I'm going to put you through beauty school and I want you to follow your dream,'" she said with a smile. "Once I got going, I



Larissa Lake hopes the new location of her salon and spa will be a welcoming environment for anyone passing by.

Photos by Allie Rivera

started getting busy and I was like, this is a real thing."

In 2010, her father-in-law offered up the original space at 281 Main St. to start Larissa Lake and Co. Salon and Spa.

"I still can't thank him enough for trusting us," she said. "I've always been an entrepreneur, but I've only been able to do that because I've had so much support."

In the years since starting the business, Larissa Lake and Co. has grown into a full-service salon and spa now employing 12 full-time and six part-time employees. Earlier this year the company reopened at its new facility to continue offering a wide range of salon and spa services.

"The only thing we don't do currently is nails," Lake said. "We have

HydraFacials, microblading, lash extensions. Basically anything current in the beauty industry, we are right on the forefront."

The primary work at the salon is hair and makeup styling for weddings.

"We do about 300 weddings a year," she said. "We just got asked to do a wedding in India in January."

Many wedding clients soon become regular customers at the salon.

"We have these relationships that we form with them," she said. "Whenever they want to feel beautiful, they come to us."

In addition to offering services for hair and makeup, the salon also has waxing and spray tanning as well as a medical aesthetician on

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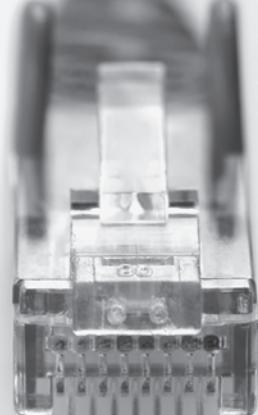
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staff – her mother.

"She is so supportive," Lake said. "She's a registered nurse and skin has always been in the forefront for her."

Working in the salon is meant to feel like a family affair. She works to ensure that each of her employees feels well supported in their work.

"She really wants you to grow in your own individual way," stylist and makeup artist Rheia DeLorge said. "A lot of places want you to conform to their style, but she really wants you to develop your own style."

Many of the people who work with Lake have been with her for years and the owner said that she wants to continue to provide opportunities for those people to grow and learn.

"One of our girls has been with us from the very beginning," she said. "Eventually we're going to open a second location in Fairfield County and she lives in Stamford, so that will be perfect for her."

DeLorge, who has been working at the salon since January, said she is highly impressed with the new location.

"She really wants to give a luxury experience," DeLorge said. "She took a historical building and made it modern, yet it still fits in with Old Wethersfield."

Lake said that when looking to expand to a larger location, staying in the historic part of town remained a top priority.

"It's historic, but we bring a little modern edge to it," she said.

She loves the small, familial atmosphere.

"I love that people are always out and about in this area and I want them to feel that if they're walking down the sidewalk, you can come on in,"



Larissa Lake is owner and stylist at Larissa Lake and Co. Salon and Spa.

she said. "It doesn't have to mean coming in and sitting in a chair. We just want people to feel welcomed at all times."

According to those who know her best, her kindness to all who walk in her doors is a large part of what makes the business such a success.

"She's incredible," DeLorge said. "She's honestly the nicest person. I can't say enough about her."

With the new location fully up and running, Lake has no plans to slow down. In addition to starting to plan for the second location, she has plans to turn her former location into a boutique that will offer locally made items as well as dresses

and clothing for rent.

Lake said she hopes to have the boutique open by the holidays.

"I'm taking all my past experiences with antiques and mixing the old with the new," she said. "I want to showcase local art and accessories. Anything that's creative and handmade, I want to have."

She took a deep breath and smiled again, acknowledging that her hard work was not the only reason she has reached success.

"This whole community has been so supportive," she said. **WL**

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News roundup

Democrats win election

The Democratic Party won a second consecutive term in power over both the Town Council and Board of Education in the Nov. 7 municipal election.

Incumbent Amy Morrin Bello had the highest vote total and, as this issue went to press, was considered the most likely person to be named the new mayor by her council colleagues. Wethersfield voters do not directly elect a mayor.

Joining her on the Town Council are Democrat incumbents Anthony Spinella and Tony Martino. Newcomers Ken Lesser, Matthew Forrest and Mary Breton also won seats. Only three Republicans were elected, incumbents Michael Rell, Michael Hurley and Jodi Latina.

Independence Party candidates Paul Copp and John Console finished well behind the rest of the pack.

Democrats Elaine Steinmiller Paradise and Ginger McCurdy were elected to two-year terms on the school board. So was Republican Chris Healy. Elected to four-year terms were Democrats Polly Moon and Kevin Hill and Republican John Cascio.

Kevin the turkey received approximately 60 write-in votes. His whimsical campaign signs encouraged people to donate to the town food bank.

Toys from Wethersfield's Attic

The Wethersfield Historical Society presents an exhibit of toys over the years from Nov. 30 to March 23. View its seldom-seen collection of playthings from the town's past alongside favorite items from today.

Victorian toys will be displayed in the period rooms of the Hurlbut-Dunham House, which will be decorated for an 1890s Christmas, and toys of all periods will be on view in the Watson Gallery at the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center.

The exhibit will open with a wine and cheese preview party at 7 p.m. Nov. 30. Tickets at the door cost \$5 for members and \$10 for others. The Watson Gallery exhibit will open to the public Dec. 1 and the Hurlbut-Dunham House will be open for the annual Holidays on Main street fair from 6-8 p.m. Dec. 7 and 1-4 p.m. Dec. 9-10 and 16-17.

This holiday season the historical society is conducting a toy drive. Bring a new, unwrapped toy to be donated to a local charity. For more information call 860-529-7656 or see wethersfieldhistory.org.

D'Esopo honored again

D'Esopo Funeral Chapel in Wethersfield and D'Esopo East



Toys from Wethersfield's Attic

Hartford Memorial Chapel received 2017 Pursuit of Excellence Awards from the National Funeral Directors Association.

Both D'Esopo facilities are members of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association. Shown are, from left, NFDA President Ahely Cozine, D'Esopo General Manager Lionel Lessard Jr. and longtime owners Janet D'Esopo Klett and Michael Klett.

EMTS keep busy

The Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association responded to 113 calls for service during the month of October. Of these, 59 people were transported to the hospital. The volunteers provided 1,873 hours of service to the community.

Schools honor students, staff and parents

The Wethersfield Public Schools held

Over the last 30 years, the Animal Hospital of Rocky Hill has transformed from a neighborhood pet clinic into a **FULL-FLEDGED ANIMAL HOSPITAL OFFERING COMPREHENSIVE AND HIGH-QUALITY VETERINARY TREATMENT**. While the scope of our services continues to grow, the commitment to our patients and their owners remains unchanged. Established in 1979 by Dr. David Haviar, the Animal Hospital of Rocky Hill is a modern and well-maintained facility, dedicated to staying ahead of the veterinary medicine curve. *Providing care for both dogs and cats, we offer a range of treatment options, personalized for both pet and owner.*

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a recognition ceremony Nov. 8 in the high school auditorium. Honored students were: Riley Keane and Joshua Williams of Charles Wright School, Sabrina Schuster and William McKenna of Emerson-Williams School, Morgan Ernst and Heath Mitchell of Hanmer School, Isabelle Houlihan and Matthew Doyle of Highcrest School, Maya Jackson and Ryan Adduci of Webb School, Olivia Dizesa and Evan Partridge of Silas Deane Middle School and Ling Chi and Thomas Dowd of Wethersfield High School.

Staff members honored were Jo-Ann Swanson of Charles Wright School, Jeremy McPhee of Emerson-Williams School, Pat Mahder of Hanmer School, Cindy Amoddio of Highcrest School, Vanessa Betancourt of Webb School, Bridget Camara of Silas Deane Middle School and Al Williams of Wethersfield High School.

Parents honored were Sara Evans of Charles Wright School, Colleen Mattatall of Emerson-Williams School, Allison Buser of Hanmer School, Patty Platosz of



D'Esopo honored again

Highcrest School, Christine Mori of Webb School, Penny Contreras of Silas Deane Middle School and Dan Bucknam of Wethersfield High School. Jeffrey Telke received special recognition.

Service will deal with grief

The Stephen Ministry of

feel discouraged.

It is designed to help people who are experiencing sadness from past or present life challenges such as job loss, broken or strained relationships, death of a loved one, suffering, pain, or the emptiness of missing family members or close friends.

Refreshments will be served after the service and Stephen Ministers will be available for those who are in need of prayer. Call 860-563-8286 to confirm your desire to attend.

D'Esopo supports military families

D'Esopo Funeral Chapel is participating in a toy and gift card collection once again this year to benefit military families through the Connecticut National Guard's Family Support Center.

The collection began Nov. 13 and continues through Dec. 6. Toys and gift cards can be dropped off at the funeral chapel at 277 Folly Brook Boulevard. This is a coordinated effort run through the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association. **WL**



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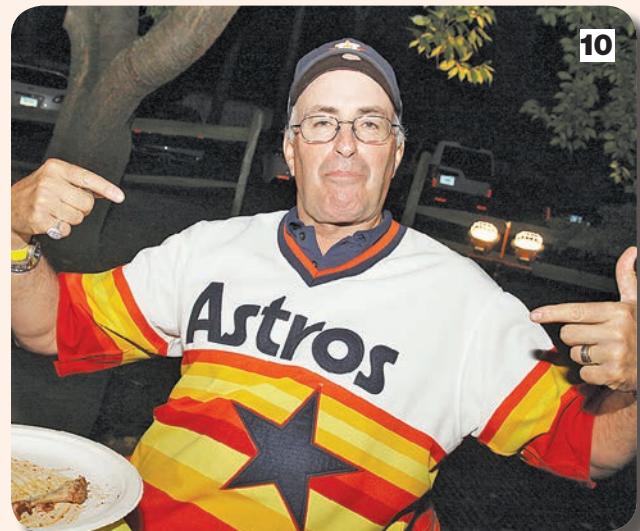
photos by Lisa Brisson

The Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce brought a little of the Old West to Old Wethersfield to raise funds for its annual Fireworks Spectacular at Cove Park. The 3rd Annual BBQ 'n' Beer fundraiser, held in the Webb Barn, found folks dressed in jeans and boots while enjoying some delicious barbecue, sipping some brews, roping a calf, singing karaoke and having an overall good time.



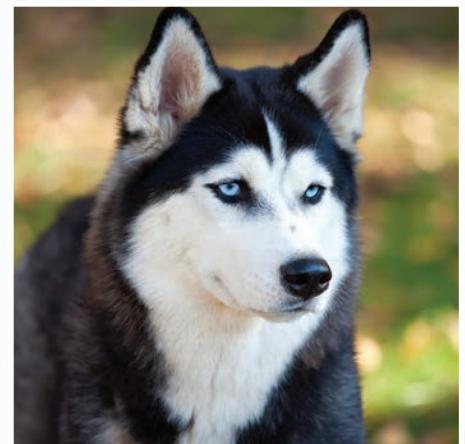
Chamber blends beer, barbecue and networking

1. Danny's Little Taste of Texas brought a host of barbecue sauces for every taste. **2.** Barbecue pulled pork, chicken thighs and all of the fixings were a big hit. **3.** Jack Bradley, Dan Silver and George Oikle share some time together. **4.** Brent Bowman, Sandy Whitaker and Dan McCarthy, from left, check out the raffle prizes. **5.** Chamber member Maureen Horowitz chats with Lou and David Durocher. **6.** Mark and Daisy Trahan were among those who came to the party. **7.** Neighbors Maggie Downie and Katelyn Rice enjoy the barbecue from Danny's Little Taste of Texas. **8.** Volunteers Patty Ference and Heather Maher from D'Esopo Funeral Chapel oversee the raffle tables. **9.** Janet Klett tries out the "calf" brought in for guests to try roping. With her, from left, are her husband Michael Klett, Cristina Harris, Dan McCarthy, and Ceil and George D'Esopo. **10.** Mike Munroe was more than happy to don his World Series-winning Houston Astros attire for the event. **11.** Cristina Harris, chairman of the event, officially rings the dinner bell with the help of Amie Dolan of Danny's Little Taste of Texas in South Windsor. **12.** Members of the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce enjoy themselves at the fundraiser. Shown from left are President Alana DiMarco, Executive Director Leslie Civitello, Todd Lamore, Brian Wilkinson, Cristina Harris, Debra Raymond and Maureen Horowitz. **13.** Shane and Miriam Breen try their hands at calf roping.





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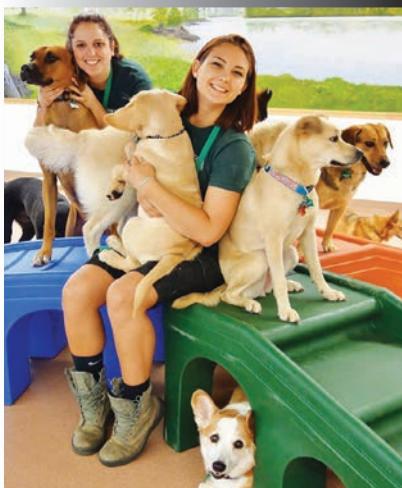
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Editorial

A few thoughts for the newly elected

Election Day has come and gone and the next group of elected officials will soon begin their work. Some of them are incumbents who have done this before; others are new to the process.

Whatever the case, we want to congratulate those who were victorious in their quest. You convinced the voters to place their trust in you by offering your ideas and insight for making this town a better place in which to live and work.

We also want to thank those whose efforts came up short. You should be praised for giving so much of your time and energy to our democratic process and for offering to serve your community.

Those now serving on the Town Council, Board of Education and in other government bodies would do well to remember why they were elected. Residents didn't vote for you because they want you to engage in partisan politics. They didn't vote for you because they want you to stubbornly hold to political ideology and constantly fight with the opposition.

They voted for you to run the government and the public schools on their behalf. They expect results, not stalemate. That's not too much to ask.

There will no doubt be times when you disagree, but don't give up. Talk to each other. Even better, listen to each other. Look for ways to achieve a result that offers the best benefit for the most people, even if it isn't exactly what you originally wanted.

Want an example of what not to do? Look at our elected leaders in Washington, D.C., who are so consumed by their partisan political games that they have become ineffective. All they do is dig in their heels and oppose everything and anything the other side proposes.

Politics is supposed to be the art of compromise, not ramming through one's own agenda and the heck with everyone else. It can best be achieved at the local level, among a small number of people who are neighbors as well as town officials.

Here's hoping that our newly elected leaders can set an example that those at the state and federal levels would be wise to emulate.

Letter

To the Editor:

Kevin the turkey was wandering around Old Wethersfield door knocking for mayor, and I'm sitting over at Village Pizza having a soda, and perhaps a decadent walk down to Main Street Creamery for some caramel salt ice cream.

It felt strange for the first time in almost 12 years to not be campaigning.

I want to express my deepest gratitude for this wonderful community's support of my previous efforts to seek and secure office. It's been a terrific run and I'm very humbled to have received many kind words over the last several months from friends, residents and colleagues.

It has been the highest honor to serve the Wethersfield I love.

My friend John Larson is fond of saying "all politics is local" and when I first heard it I never fully comprehended its significance as much as I do now. Whether talking with constituents in Stop & Shop, or Dunkin' Donuts, or responding to an email concern, so much gets done quietly by those of us serving "Ye Most Ancient Town."

I am especially grateful to have had two terms as your mayor. I know at the onset I declared my intention to focus on bipartisan spirit and economic development, along with strong schools. I feel confident

saying that I've met those expectations.

Many, many new businesses have arrived in Wethersfield. Our most recent achievement with The Borden on the Silas Deane will, with continued zgood fortune, replace the blighted Fun Zone, an empty eyesore for decades.

But it was the more low-profile work that makes a great difference in our town. I've been blessed to serve with fabulous colleagues all these years on both sides of the aisle. I consider them deep friends.

My heartfelt thank you, to the residents of Wethersfield, for your support, insight and even constructive criticism.

Paul Montinieri

wethersfield LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



First, Winter Storm Names...

Naming winter storms is unique to WFSB, dating back to the days of the Travelers Weather Service. It's a tradition that started in 1971, that our station is proud to carry on today!

Names are easy to remember, especially the ones that have

been attached to Connecticut's biggest winter storms. If you've lived in Connecticut long enough you'll remember Blizzard Larry (the Blizzard of '78); or, perhaps the big ice storm of December 1973 named Felix. In this decade, there was Storm Alfred in late October of 2011 when heavy, wet snow caused a record power

outage. And, it was Blizzard Charlotte that dumped up to 40" of snow on the state in 2013.

In order for a storm to get a name, it has to meet certain criteria: we must expect at least 6" of snow for much of the state, and/or $\frac{1}{2}$ " of ice accretion (a significant ice storm).

When it comes to the list

of names, past themes have included "former First Ladies" and notable sports figures with ties to Connecticut. For this season, we had our team of reporters (since they're the ones having to be live from the field, 'in' the storms) provide 2 names each for a letter of the alphabet and then let our viewers vote on Facebook. [WL](#)



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